ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Methods and apparatus for switching between a live video decoding and a recorded playback in a digital video and recording system. A received video data stream is transmitted to a first-in first-out video decoder buffer without first looping the video data stream through a playback buffer. The video data stream is transmitted from the video decoder buffer to a video decoder. If a "pause" command is received, the video data stream is transmitted to a first-in first-out playback buffer, while continuing to transmit the video data stream to the video decoder buffer. Transmission of the video data stream to the video decoder buffer is halted when the video decoder buffer fills up. The last byte of the video data stream that was transmitted to the video decoder buffer is marked. If a "play" command is received, the video data stored in the video decoder buffer is transmitted to the video decoder. The video data stored in the playback buffer is transmitted to the video decoder buffer starting at a point immediately after the data element that was marked previously.